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To BRITONS!

A TRACT,

IN FORM OF A

DISCOURSE.

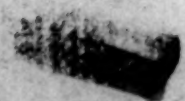
By a LAY-BROTHER.

*Behold how good and joyful a thing it is: brethren to
dwell together in unity!*

Ps. 133. 1.

EXETER:

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TO THE EDITOR

A F R A C T

D I S C U S S I O N



P. LAY-BROTHER

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TRACT,

IN FORM OF A DISCOURSE, &c.

PSALM 144, V. 10, TO THE END.

*It is He that giveth salvation unto kings : who delivereth
David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

*Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children ;
whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right
hand of falsehood.*

*That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth ; that
our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the simi-
litude of a palace :*

*That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store ;
that our sheep may bring forth thousands, and ten thousands
in our streets :*

*That our oxen may be strong to labor ; that there be no breaking
in, nor going out ; that there be no complaining in our streets.*

*Happy is that people that is in such a case : yea, happy is that
people, whose GOD is the LORD.*

THE Psalm, of which my text forms a considerable part, is ascribed to David, the son of Jesse ; and was probably composed after his accession to the throne of Israel ; whilst the minds of the people, which had been greatly agitated by the disturbances at the close of the preceding reign, were still in a state of effervescence and disquiet : and when many, probably, even of his followers, halted between two opinions, as respecting the opposing interests of himself, and the descendants of Saul : at a time when he was pressed by the Philistines and others from

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without ;

without; and had scarcely felt his security within his dominions: In short, when he had many declared enemies, and few if any approved friends, on whose arm he might rely in time of war, or in whose counsels he might confide in times of peace, as assistants in the dispensation of that equity and happiness, which his affectionate zeal wished to see generally diffused amongst his numerous subjects.

Important as such weighty concerns must needs have been, he does not despair nor sink under them; neither does he presumptuously trust in his own bow, or fondly imagine that his sword could help him; but with a devotion for which his character is peculiarly eminent; encouraged by his former experience of the divine power, favor, and protection; refts all his hopes in GOD. *For (says he) it is He that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.* Having thus resigned himself to the care of that Providence, by which he had been raised from the sheepfold to the diadem; in confidence that the LORD his salvation would compleat unto the end the good work he had graciously begun in him, he proceeds to pour forth petitions; founded, not in the fordid motives of private gratification; but in the ardor of his desires to promote the Glory of his Maker and the happiness of the people committed to his charge: and as if anticipating by faith the success of his prayers, proceeds to enumerate the blessed effects of such success, in the following part of my text.

* Under circumstances of impending danger and distress, such was the usual conduct of David: a conduct which we cannot but admire; which we should do well to imitate: I say we; for in this our favored land, so intimately
are

* Whether David were precisely in the situation I have supposed, at the composition of the psalm I have quoted, I pretend not to determine; but the general context of the psalms tends, I think, to corroborate my deduction.

are the interests of the king and people interwoven in the fabric of its excellent constitution, as to render it expedient for each to act in concert with the other, for the support and advantage of the whole. It is true, our times and circumstances are not perfectly similar to those of the royal prophet and his kingdom, but sufficiently so to warrant our joining with one consent in the prayers of my text. I hardly need to mention who are the *strange children* from whom we should pray to be delivered: the late tumults and commotions which have distracted a neighbouring country; have sapt the vitals of its constitution, and induced anarchy and ruin on the wrecks of its established government, its commerce, and its fortunes, sufficiently point them out: the blustering egotisms, and vain gasconades of its generals, and the vaunting rhodomantades of its representatives, declare the mouths that speak vanity—while also the alienation of property, under the pretended sanction of law, the rapine, the massacres, and last, not least, the recent murder of the royal victim, mark the right hands of falsehood, and characterize the strange children in the persons of the faction of France—for a faction I wish to think it: being very unwilling to suppose, that the french nation at large, so considerable a proportion of humanity, of Christendom especially; should be involved in such a scene of guilt, of perfidy, and murder: rather would I hope, that the gentle and the meek spirited, surprised by the atrocious deeds of their cruel brethren, which they could neither foresee nor prevent, have been obliged to submit to the galling chains of many-headed despotism; till in the course of Providence they again may emerge from their wretched obscurity, to possess the land in peace; and rise triumphant over that factious minority, who now exultingly wield the iron sceptre; *whose feet are swift to shed blood; in whose ways are*

destruction and misery; and who know so little of the way of peace, that not content with the subversion of public tranquillity, they have defaced its genial image in the private recesses of the state; forcibly planting the dreaded substitutes of famine, grief, and horror, in many a reduced and many a mutilated family: and ever daringly threatening to spread their seditious principles amongst us, and other nations, whom they insolently defy. *But, O my soul come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man.* *

Be this the voice of every true briton, may his generous heart revolt at such scenes as these; and fearing lest he should be deluded by their crafty wiles, may he stop his ears from the sly insinuations and seditious counsels of those who lie in wait to deceive; and may he add his own earnest endeavours, to his sincere prayers, for the prosperity of our king, the beloved father of his people; the honored representative of a great and generous nation; and the head of the same body politic, of which every true briton is a member.

We know in a great degree the happy medium in which lie the secure paths of true freedom. But do the French know this? how can they form a judgement of regions they have never trodden? they who have scarcely emerged from the incumbent load of slavery, which pressed them down, e'er as by their specific levity, like balloons, they have vaulted into the regions of aerial castles; and from their unstable sublimity have looked down on those, who in sobriety pursued their various occupations, in the quiet possession of their minds, administering to the comforts of their dear wives, children, and dependents, to the pleasure
and

* Gen. 49, 6.

and advantage of a respectable society ; and to the maintenance of that state, which prudence, judgement, and religion teach them to revere.

Britons shew yourselves men, use your own understandings, and suffer them not to be deluded by these castle-builders, nor by their emissaries, nor their british deputies ; british did I say ? I hope there are but few among us who thus disgrace their name : yet, we cannot, I fear, deny the existence of some who misuse their splendid talents to injure the cause which they are bound to support, of others who even subsist on the pay of government, wear its garb ; and yet resist, and endeavour to betray it——Brethren are these Britons ?

I should be a bad advocate for my country, nay, I should even disgrace the cause which I wish to promote ; should I strive to throw an unmerited odium on those honest men, who in unguarded moments, have inadvertently dropt expressions, imprudent rather than inimical ; and which the pressure of argument, warmth of temper, or other sudden circumstances have extorted : such may have arisen from misconceived opinions, or misguided judgement ; and uttered in a noble spirit of freedom, may have evinced a valuable part of many a respectable character, whose energy may hereafter I hope be usefully employed, in supporting the general independence and happiness of the kingdom. I would refer all who possess their minds to their own cool and deliberate reason ; and surely they will not persist in times like these, in any measure to weaken the power of government. Nor let them think that Britain can consent to lose them : she is no step-mother, but widely and affectionately extends her parental arms to embrace even her rebellious children, who will sincerely return to her.

But if they will not return ; if they will still continue openly to oppose the authority, or, under the garb of friendship

friendship to operate secret mischiefs ; and with the subtilty of the serpent, to plant the envenomed fang in her fostering bosom ; can we, my brethren, who love and revere her, wish her still to cherish these monsters of ingratitude ; these aliens to our mothers children ? Ah ! no—although children, they are unnatural, they are strange children, and join themselves with those from whom the true, the dutiful children should pray to be delivered : shutting our eyes, and stopping our ears, against their seductive arguments ; and each, in our several stations, endeavouring to resist and counteract their malevolent proceedings : and may such our prayers and endeavours, be attended with the desired success : *that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth ; that our daughters may be as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace :* and that our land may enjoy the other blessings enumerated in the sequel of my text.

These I forbear to enlarge upon at present, being willing to dwell a little longer on the contrast. And here, we want not imagination to invent, what facts have realized. If you wish more information on this dreadful topic, read the accounts of french freedom :—read there, what I care not to write : satiate yourselves with the dark recitals of rapine, violence, and murder ; and from the humiliating history of mankind, unrestrained by religion and by law ; learn to respect these pillars of ours, and every other constitution : fly to them for protection from such tremendous scenes ; for, should we want that protection ; our children—where are they ? O ye fathers, ye, that in any station, from the highest opulence to the lowest indigence, know the delights of a family ; that taste the exquisite pleasure of administering to the comforts of those ye love ; say, how could ye bear to see your houses rased to the ground ; your wives torn from your embraces ; your sons falling at the point of the assassin's knife ; and your daughters exposed to famine, infamy, and prostitution ? how could ye endure to
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be eye-witnesses of such evils, without the power of averting them; and moreover, to find these your private calamities, but as specks in the general devastation, consuming the land? the corn, and other productions of the soil, prematurely trodden down and destroyed; the labourers dispersed; the farmers fled; the granaries exhausted; the cattle straying over the broken fences; and the timid sheep, without a shepherd, fleeing before their half famished murderers, urged by the eager appetites of wolves, to seek in their destruction a temporary precarious subsistence in the property of others; for, reduced as the numbers of men might then be, where should they find bread in such a wilderness of woe?

From such horrible consequences of liberty unrestrained, may the LORD in mercy deliver us all!—On the all supporting arm of his good Providence, which has hitherto graciously preserved and protected us, in many difficulties and perils; may we still securely rely: and so may we cherish ourselves with the persuasion, that no such direful events await this land!

For we are in a situation in which the french never were. Britons have learnt by long experience to use the cup of liberty with soberness; the inexperienced french drink to excess; they are full of this new wine; in a continued state of intoxication; and like madmen, who fancy themselves kings, they fancy themselves the greatest people upon earth: and because *they were* slaves, would fain persuade us that *we are* so: we, who know as little of slavery as they know of liberty. For whatever these vain braggadocios may say; who, in sober seriousness, will tell me I am a slave? Where is the man amongst us mean enough to suppose himself such? *—May all true britons still enjoy,
and

* Well, in my opinion would it be, did britons know as little of slavery in their plantations abroad as at home; but I hope their eyes are opened—and that they will soon cease to inflict on the poor africans, what themselves could so ill bear.

and guard against the abuse of, *their* inestimable privilege of liberty; may they learn, more and more, to respect the authority which supports it. May they *fear* GOD; *honour the king**; and meddle not with them who are given to change.

It may be thought, I have been very liberal in abuse on the french nation; wherefore I would wish to repeat, that it is not to the french nation at large, but to the people of the faction that I mean to point: and from these, and all their emissaries and wicked instruments, whether at home or abroad, may the LORD deliver us: that so our sons being brought up with care *in the nurture and admonition of the LORD*† may be as plants grown up in their youth; and being graciously preserved from walking in the counsel of the ungodly, may become as trees planted by the rivers of water, to bring forth fruit in their seasons; ¶ and that the pleasure of the LORD may prosper in their hands: || That our daughters may be adorned with sobriety and good works; † That the blessings of providence may crown the labors of the husbandman with success; that our valleys may stand so thick with corn, that they shall laugh and sing. § That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands—that our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay: no leading into captivity, and no complaining in our streets: But all with joy and gladness celebrating the praises of the LORD.

Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose GOD is the LORD. And that we may be of that happy people, may the LORD of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ the SON of GOD, our blessed LORD GOD and Saviour.

A M E N.

* 1 Pet. 2. 17.

† Eph. 6. 4.

¶ Ps. 1. 3.

|| Is. 53. 10.

‡ Tim. 2. 9, 10.

§ Ps. 65, 24.

